



**The Africa Regional Democracy Fund Program
Guidelines**

Dear Applicant,

We are pleased to provide you with information related to the Africa Regional Democracy Fund (ARDF), including program guidelines, application instructions, and contact information. Applications are available online at <https://cm.usembassy.gov/education-culture/small-grants-program/>, upon request via email to grantsyaounde@state.gov, or at the embassy's main entrance. Please read all information carefully before completing the application form. All applicants with strong projects matching the fund requirements may complete and submit their application for consideration via email or to the address indicated below:

**The Africa Regional Democracy Fund
Embassy of the United States of America
B.P. 817 Yaoundé**

Selection Timeline

Application deadline: June 4, 2020.
Selection period: July-August 2020
Award period: August–September 2020

We receive a high number of proposals each year and we try to respond to each applicant. If you have not heard from us within one (1) year of submitting your application, please request the status of your application via email at grantsyaounde@state.gov.

Important Reminders

The Africa Regional Democracy Fund Application Form is FREE of charge and the Embassy DOES NOT require any payment to receive and evaluate a project.

- Submit filled, typed and signed ARDF application form
- Provide a detailed budget (Excel) and a timeline for completion
- Fill and submit the SF-424 Federal Assistance Application form (If preselected)
- Do not submit any documents not requested in these instructions
- Applicant organization must have a DUNS number and be registered into SAM.gov
- If your project is chosen for consideration, an embassy representative will contact you to discuss your proposal and verify the information on your application as appropriate.
- Remember to include a current mailing address, telephone number, and e-mail address
- Make a copy of the application and all supporting documents for your records
- Send the original completed application to the U.S. Embassy, preferably via email at grantsyaounde@state.gov.

Contact Information

**Address: The Africa Regional Democracy Fund
Embassy of the United States of America
B.P. 817 Yaoundé**

Email: grantsyaounde@state.gov
Telephone: 2220-1500 Ext. 4171 or 4070
Fax: 2220-1503
Office Hours: Monday through Thursday 7:30 am - 5:00 pm and Friday 7:30 am - 12:30 pm

Thank you for your interest in the **Africa Regional Democracy Fund**. We look forward to hearing from you.



*Embassy of the United States of America
Yaounde, Cameroon*

NB: The U.S. Embassy expects to receive funding for the ARDF program before September 30; Grant awards are contingent on the receipt of funding. If the program is not approved, no grants will be awarded under this call.



Introduction

The purpose of the ARDF for Democracy, Human Rights and Governance is to strengthen democratic institutions, improve governance, and promote respect for human rights in Cameroon. The ARDF provides assistance to Cameroonian organizations that seek to implement short-term, highly targeted activities designed to show measurable results. Last year, ARDF funding supported organizations in all ten regions of Cameroon. ARDF grants are using between USD 20,000-25,000 (10 million-12.5 million francs FCFA). A single group may not receive more than one grant in a given funding period. Organizations that have successfully partnered with international donors in the past with proven records will be more competitive for this program and stand a greater chance of receiving ARDF funding.

Basic Project Requirements

The U.S. Embassy will consider funding only those projects that:

- Have a funding ceiling of \$25,000;
- Are initiated by Cameroonian organizations (excluding the executive branch of the Cameroonian Government);
- Promote political pluralism and respect for human and civil rights;
- Benefit a large number of people
- Include activities, expenditures and timelines that are consistent, reasonable, and within the ability of the organization to implement;
- Can be completed within one year, without requiring further ARDF assistance; and
- Respect environmental norms.

Basic Project Reporting

ARDF grantees will be required to:

- Submit quarterly reports (financial and activity) to the U.S. Embassy;
- Ensure that expenditures are supported by adequate documentation and that funds are expended for their intended purposes;
- Maintain basic financial records for the duration of the funded activity, and for a period of three years after submission of the final invoice and the project's conclusion.

Project Categories and Acceptable Activities

- **Promote Accountable, Transparent, and Responsive Governance:**
 - Support local civil society entities, including think tanks, academic research, watchdog groups, media associations, journalists, and other civil society actors to advocate for legislative transparency, accountability, and oversight at all levels of government.
 - Provide specialized, technical support to support democratic governance, with a particular focus on legislative oversight.
- **Promote Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms:**
 - Support the protection, mitigation, and responses to human rights violations and abuses, in particular human rights violations affecting the most vulnerable, by strengthening human rights frameworks, institutions, and oversight.
 - Support to local, and key international, human rights organizations and institutions to promote human rights systems, policies, and protection, with particular focus on women and youth.
 - Strengthen the capacity of community-based organizations, including faith-based organizations; and resident, vendor, or other associations through civic education and citizen participation to advocate for democratic rights and norms that advance public involvement in civic life.
- **Support Democratic Processes and Promotion of Strong Democratic Norms:**

Support to political processes, such as peace processes and negotiations, which seek long-term democratization and respect for human rights and accountability, with a particular focus on empowering women, youth, and marginalized and vulnerable populations.



Unacceptable Activities

ARDF funding may not be used to conduct the following activities or purchase the following items:

- Paramilitary activities, and prohibited from supporting police and other law enforcement forces (even if the proposed activity is consistent with programs described above.);
- Construction of buildings;
- Purchase of vehicles;
- Recurring administrative costs such as building or equipment maintenance, rent, office supplies, or administrative salaries;
- Travel outside of the project locations;
- Conferences or workshops that lack a specific and clearly-articulated goal;
- Research projects without a results-oriented component;
- Humanitarian assistance or support for refugees (unless human rights related);
- Activities that do not directly encourage or promote increased respect for civil and human rights;
- Purchase of pharmaceuticals, pesticides, or fertilizers;
- Activities to influence the outcome of elections;
- Training or advising, support for police, prisons, other law enforcement forces, military, or any program of internal intelligence or surveillance.

Selection and Award Process

The program is highly competitive. Historically, less than ten percent of applicants receive funding each year. If a project is selected for consideration, a representative from the U.S. Embassy will contact the applicant to further verify the application information. The selection committee will base its decision on the potential impact, feasibility, and financial soundness of the proposed activity. The committee will consider the record of accomplishment of the organization proposing the activity as well as its contribution to the project. The selection and award process consists of several steps as follows:

- The ARDF staff will review all the applications and select a preliminary list of projects
- The ARDF committee will review the preliminary list and compose a list of potential grantees
- The ARDF staff will work with potential grantees on suggested updates to their project proposals. During this phase, the Grants Officer makes the final recommendation to the committee and submits a final list of projects for the Ambassador's approval
- The Ambassador and the project's representative sign the agreements and the grants are awarded.

Selection Criteria

Applications will be reviewed in two phases according to their administrative compliance and their quality assessment. Projects which fail to fulfill the administrative compliance requirements will be excluded from further consideration.

➤ Administrative Compliance

The application was submitted on the form posted on the embassy's website or collected from the Embassy and submitted within the announcement's deadline; form is complete, proposal meets program requirements and application includes all the supporting required documents.

➤ Technical Assessment (50 points)

Assessment will be conducted by an evaluation panel on a scale from 0 to 50 points and recommendation for an award will be based on highest scores and total program funding:

A. Project justification, goals and benefits (20 points)

The proposal addresses a specific problem that affects the community and proposes a project that will improve the political and/or social conditions. It targets an adequate number of people and describes how it will benefit the target population.



B. Sustainability (10 points)

The project has a concrete and realistic strategy to assure sustainability of results beyond project completion.

C. Budget and budget justification (10 points)

The budget description should detail all funds requested. The estimated expenditures of the proposed activities are necessary, reasonable, and realistic for the implementation of the project. Budgets submitted should follow the budget format provided, and filled in an Excel spreadsheet. Please also specify whether matching funds and other contributions are pending or secured.

D. Organizational capacity and experience (5 points)

Applicants must show capacity to implement the scope and scale of the proposed work and the ability to successfully complete the project within the proposed budget and timeline. Organizations that have previously carried out similar or other human rights projects may be ranked higher during the evaluation process.

E. Timeline (5 points)

Project timeline should be feasible within 12 months, appropriate and connected to project goals and budget.

How to Apply for the Fund

- Complete the application form and attach additional pages if necessary. The application form is available online or can be requested via email at grantsyaounde@state.gov;
- Type clearly and answer each question as best as possible;
- All applications must include a specific project budget with cost estimates and a timeline;
- The project's representative must sign the application form;
- Send the original completed application to the U.S. Embassy.